

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A method for carrying out a bartering system over a network, comprising:
  - receiving a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire;
  - receiving a priority indication for the at least one needed item, wherein the priority indication indicates a level of desire the user has in acquiring the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates items that are equivalent to the at least one needed item of i) each of the at least one needed item, and ii) each group of at least one item;
  - constructing the needs list with the priority indication into a barter protocol language; and
  - searching available items for a match with each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication wherein an item having a lower priority indication is matched as being equivalent to the at least one needed item only if an item having a higher priority is not found higher priority indicated needed items are attempted to be matched before lower priority indicated needed items.
2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising wherein the bartering protocol language specifies a range of near equivalency associated with a plurality of dissimilar items to form near equivalent items, wherein the near equivalent items are items that are dissimilar to the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates whether a near equivalent item will be satisfactory to the user in lieu of the at least one needed item an availability list having at least one available item the user desires to trade for the at least one needed item.
3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein searching available items is performed first within a [[same]] first bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the search within the [[same]] first bartering system.
4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising;
  - translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needed items needs list from the first barter protocol language to at least one of i) a common barter protocol language and ii) a different barter protocol language of the different bartering system, wherein the common barter protocol language comprises a representation of the needs list and the availability list that

is common to both the first bartering system and the different bartering system and ii) a different barter protocol language of the different bartering system.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the needs list further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each near equivalent item having an associated priority indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item is not found.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a direct match having a one to one correspondence.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a chained association involving the needs list and availability lists of a plurality of users.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[1]] 3, wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising:

translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needs list from the first barter protocol language to the second barter protocol language the priority indication for a given needed item is indicated by a monetary value that a user is willing to provide for the needed item to carry out a bartering transaction.

9. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving a second priority indication for a given available item indicating a user's desire to use the given available item to carry out a bartering transaction.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the second priority indication is indicated by a monetary value that the user is willing to accept for the given available item.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a monetary value associated with each of the at least one needed item.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a payment value for a given needed item from the monetary value.

13. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving monetary value associated with each of the at least one available item.
14. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a received value for a given available item from the monetary value.
15. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the monetary value is received from data provided by a rating agency.
16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 13 further comprising:  
receiving a priority indication for a group of two or more items wherein the monetary value is received from data provided by a rating agency.
17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the barter protocol language is in XML.
18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein each of the at least one needed item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.
19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein each physical item and each nonphysical item has a corresponding representation mechanism within the barter protocol language.
20. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the nonphysical item represents a needed service.
21. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein each of the at least one available item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.
22. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the nonphysical item represents an available service.
23. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising indicating equivalency of at least one available item with at least one needed item.

24. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

25. (Currently amended) A barter protocol language comprising:

means for specifying a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire of needed items for each one of a plurality of users;

means for specifying an availability list of available items for each one of the plurality of users;

means for specifying a priority indication for at least one of i) each needed item, and ii) each group of at least one item, indicating a corresponding user's priority for acquiring the needed item; and

means for specifying a range of near equivalency associated with a plurality of dissimilar items to form near equivalent items, wherein the near equivalent items are items that are dissimilar to the at least one needed item, and wherein equivalent items, each near equivalent item having has an associated priority indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item cannot be found.

26. (Currently amended) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the means for wherein an item having a lower priority indication is matched as being equivalent to the at least one needed item only if an item having a higher priority is not found specifying the availability list of available items further comprises means for indicating at least one available item for being utilized in acquiring at least one needed item.

27. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the language is one of a markup language.

28. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 27 wherein the mark up language is XML.

29. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein each needed item and each available item has a corresponding representation mechanism.

30. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the needed items and available items can be physical items and nonphysical items.

31. (Original) The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the nonphysical items are representative of services.

32. (Currently amended) A computer program product comprising:

A computer usable medium including computer usable program code for system having means for carrying out bartering over a network, said computer program product comprising:

means for computer usable program code for receiving a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire;

means for computer usable program code for receiving a priority indication for at least one needed item, wherein the priority indication indicates a level of desire the user has in acquiring the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates items that are equivalent to the at least one needed item of i) each of the at least one needed item, and ii) each group of at least one item;

means for computer usable program code for constructing the needs list with the priority indication into a barter protocol language; and

means for computer usable program code for searching available items for a match with each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication an item having a lower priority indication is matched as being equivalent to the at least one needed item only if an item having a higher priority is not found higher priority indicated needed items are attempted to be matched before lower priority indicated needed items

33. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 32 further comprising means for receiving an availability list having at least one available item the user desires to trade for the at least one needed item wherein the bartering protocol language specifies a range of near equivalency associated with a plurality of dissimilar items to form near equivalent items, wherein the near equivalent items are items that are dissimilar to the at least one needed item, and wherein the priority indication indicates whether a near equivalent item will be satisfactory to the user in lieu of the at least one needed item.

34. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 32 further comprising:

computer usable program code for wherein the means for searching available items is performed first within a [[same]] first bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the search within the [[same]] first bartering system.

35. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 34 wherein the first bartering system associated with a first barter protocol language and wherein the different bartering system associated with a second barter protocol language and further comprising:

computer usable program code for wherein the means for translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needed items from the first barter protocol language to at least one of i) a common barter protocol language and ii) a different barter protocol language of the different bartering system, wherein the common barter protocol language comprises a representation of the needs list and the availability list that is common to both the first bartering system and the different bartering system and ii) a different barter protocol language of the different bartering system.

36. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 32 wherein the needs list further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each near equivalent item having an associated priority indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item is not found.

37. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 32 wherein the match is a direct match having a one to one correspondence.

38. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 32 wherein the match is a chained association involving the needs list and availability lists of a plurality of users.

39. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim [[33]] 34 further comprising computer usable program code for translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needs list from the first barter protocol language to the second barter protocol language and wherein the means for enabling an indication of equivalency of at least one available item with the at least one needed item.

40. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 33 further comprising: computer usable program code for wherein the means for searching further comprises means for finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

41. (Currently amended) The computer program product system of claim 40 wherein the at least one given needed item and the at least one given available item are dissimilar items.